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conduction rate is determined by taking an average slope of a graph of conductance of the permeate compartment over time. --

REMARKS

Introductory Remarks Including Status of Claims

The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application.

Prior to this Amendment, claims 99-143, 172-179, 189-216, 233-240, and 245-254 were pending and stood rejected. Also, claims 144-171, 180-188, 217-232, and 241-244 were withdrawn from consideration. NOTE: it is the applicants' understanding that claim 180 should be classified as withdrawn rather than rejected. If the Examiner disagrees, clarification is respectfully requested.

In this Amendment, the applicants cancel claims 189-248 so that claims 99-143, 172-179, and 249-254 remain for further examination. Also, the applicants introduce new dependent claim 255. Among the remaining claims, claims 99, 122, and 249 are the independent claims, with claims 99 and 249 being directed to a membrane and claim 122 being directed to a membrane claimed with use of process steps.

The present amendments are for clarification purposes and do not introduce new matter or require new searching by the Examiner. For example, new claim 255 is supported throughout the specification including page 12. The applicants request a telephone interview if the Examiner